

**The Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee**

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**Minutes of the January 30, 2003 Meeting**

On the call of its sponsor, Rear Admiral Roy J. Casto, USCG, Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District, and after public notice in the Federal Register (Notice of meetings, 67 Federal Register 232 page 72021 dated December 3, 2002), the sixty-fifth meeting of the Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, January 30, 2003. The meeting was held at the Houston Pilots Association, Houston, Texas. The published agenda for the meeting is included as enclosure (1). A list of attendees is attached as enclosure (2). The documents which were made available to and/or prepared by the committee are available for public inspection and copying at the office of the Committee's Executive Secretary, CDR Thomas P. Marian, USCG, at U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service Houston/Galveston, 9640, Clinton Drive, Houston, TX 77029. Some of the documents are also available electronically through the Committee's website ([www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/hogansac/hogan.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/hogansac/hogan.html)). A recording of the meeting was made and is available upon request. Requests for copies of the recording must be received by January 31, 2005.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tim Leitzell at 9:00 AM.

**OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Captain Kevin Cook welcomed the committee members and guests and thanked the Houston Pilots Association for hosting the meeting. He was especially pleased that RADM Casto was able to attend this meeting. The Committee will be welcoming five new members during the meeting who will face a constant challenge as they carry on the traditions of HOGANSAC. The five departing members will be recognized along with two members of the port community. Captain Cook noted that the Agenda was very full. He also formally welcomed RADM Casto, noting that RADM Casto's area of responsibility includes 10,300 miles of inland waterways, from Florida to Mexico. RADM Casto took command of the district just before September 11, 2001 and has been busy since.

**REMARKS BY COMMITTEE SPONSOR**

"Captain Leitzell, thank you for inviting me to this inaugural meeting of HOGANSAC's 2003 - 2004 charter. Tim, congratulations on your fourth tour of duty as chairman of this fine Committee. I understand that you are entering your 21<sup>st</sup> year of membership with HOGANSAC. Someone even mentioned to me that you used to have full head of black hair when you started out!

Captain Brown, thank you very much for hosting today's meeting. Paul, it is always heartening to observe the genuine cooperative spirit that exists between the two pilot organizations in this region as well as the tremendous cooperation that exists between the Coast Guard and the users of the Houston-Galveston-Texas City port complex.

As I look back at your accomplishments since my arrival in the Eighth Coast Guard District nearly two years ago, I am truly awed at both the persistence and adaptability of HOGANSAC.

Persistence from the perspective that you have not lost your zest for grappling with navigational safety issues in a world that is focused on security. To your credit, you have not given short shrift to pending waterway safety initiatives.

This was quite evident in your determination to aid the Coast Guard in conserving its resources by orchestrating the damaged Aids to Navigation self-reporting program. A program designed to encourage mariners to report allisions that they had had with our ATON. When I assumed the HOGANSAC sponsor reins the self-reporting rate was at a mere 1%. After a year of outreach this rate climbed 13 fold to 13%. Yet, you were not content to rest on your laurels and subsequently redoubled your efforts to stress to the commercial mariner the importance of notifying the Coast Guard of ATON that were destroyed by allisions. Remarkably, as a result of your dogged efforts, the self-reporting rate nearly doubled to 25% by last summer and has since climbed to over 50% for the past 2 months. Simply put, HOGANSAC is directly responsible for recouping tens of thousands of dollars for the Coast Guard and the nearly 50 self-reports that have been received in 2002 alone, is by far the highest self-reporting rate in the entire United States.

HOGANSAC also spearheaded efforts to:

- Publish a comprehensive Channel Facility Guide - an invaluable and comprehensive compilation of facility information for the most seasoned of mariners.
- Thanks to the efforts of CDR Alan Bunn of NOAA, HOGANSAC facilitated the relocation of the PORTS data meters in more effective monitoring locations. This has resulted in the mariner receiving more accurate current and tide data within the Houston Ship Channel.
- Mr. Raymond Butler operating under the HOGANSAC banner coordinated a major undertaking to establish an alternate route for tugs and tows transiting from Bolivar to the port. This ongoing program is designed to reduce vessel congestion in the Bolivar Roads area.
- HOGANSAC's Larry Miller - with outstanding assistance from the Galveston District, ACOE - worked extensively with various waterways interests in monitoring the Army Corps of Engineers deepening and widening project of the HSC. He, also - in coordination with Captain Mike Morris - oversaw the testing of various electronic navigation projects throughout the HSC.
- Captain Michael Godinich and Mr. Todd Wheeler of HOGANSAC coordinated extensive discussions on fine-tuning and memorializing rig movement procedures through the Houston Ship Channel. This culminated in a comprehensive channel obstruction policy by the COTP that balanced commercial needs with safety.

- Captain Tim Leitzell tackled the daunting task of reducing barge breakaways at various facilities on the Houston Ship Channel. HOGANSAC's efforts resulted in a significant decrease in the number of barges torn from their moorings by the passage of deep draft vessels.
- Ms. Amy Husted on behalf of HOGANSAC, assisted the committee in harnessing the resources of Kirby Marine to address the unpredictable high water and currents in the lower San Jacinto River. This initiative will undoubtedly improve safety during periods of high water in this region.
- And, as always, HOGANSAC's interface between the commercial mariners and recreational boating public was extremely productive as evidenced by the educational efforts to warn swimmers of the perils of swimming near Lynchburg and for recreational boaters to give way to the much larger vessels constrained to the confines of the ship channel. Thank you Ms. Caplan and Ms. Roof.

Remarkably, all of this was accomplished in addition to the numerous vexing issues that confronted HOGANSAC in the port security arena.

Which brings me to my second point, HOGANSAC's adaptability vis-à-vis port security.

Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 port security meant, at the most, a guard shack, a chain link fence and perhaps a pad lock or two. This was driven not only by the lack of any articulable threat but by economics. That is, the extremely competitive nature of maritime commerce places a premium not only on speed but on the bottom line.

Surely, facilities and businesses can construct state-of-the-art monitoring suites, triple chain-link fences covered in barbed-wire and arrays of motion detectors... **IF** they have the money and the need. However, the razor-thin margins associated with the maritime business are not conducive to these types of expenditures. Moreover, relying upon the federal government to act as a safety net by inspecting all modes of transportation before they entered the port would bring commerce to its knees.

Thus, HOGANSAC, led by the energetic Miss Kelly Teichman and enthusiastic Mr. Raymond Butler, was faced with a Gordian knot when they realized they had to confront the prospect of reducing the risk of acts of terrorism in one of the world's largest ports within the nation's 4<sup>th</sup>-largest city. A daunting task by any measure.

Yet, despite the hundreds of daily ship transits, scores of tank farms, miles of petro-chemical plants and dozens of moorings, a plan began to take shape. This plan, your plan, expertly wove the priorities of the Coast Guard, the port authorities, the pilots, the brown water fleet operators, shipping companies chemical and oil facilities and a score of diverse interests.

You assessed and addressed:

- Shore-side and water-side access to facilities;

- Identifying facility vulnerabilities and crafting local non-governmental solutions designed to eliminate these "chinks in the armor."
- Educating recreational boaters on the location and impact of security zones;
- Implementation of credentials for mariners that call in your ports;
- Fusing multiple pieces of sensitive - yet unclassified - information in order to develop a more accurate tactical picture when confronted with unspecified threats;
- Creating a coherent port security network that permits the sharing of sensitive security information with designated industry points of contact;

Perhaps one of the brightest silver linings associated with these various port security initiatives is the positive impact on safety. Awareness of one's surrounding and the emphasis on vigilance protects a port from both external and internal influences. An individual that is alert for signs of intrusion is more apt to notice a leaking pipe, gear adrift or an improperly moored barge. Likewise, a vigilant mariner will be more attuned to his or her surroundings and pay closer attention to the small boat violating a security zone, a craft loitering near an anchorage area or an aid to navigation that has disappeared beneath the waves.

In closing, I cannot thank you enough for the outstanding results you have achieved over the years. Tim, as usual, your agenda is packed and I am sure there are times when you thought you could barely keep your head above water when your team was faced with a myriad of port-security issues. Rest assured, you and your HOGANSAC brethren have thrived and excelled during these exciting - yet daunting and sometimes frustrating - times and I am confident that the future fruit that HOGANSAC bears during your 2003-04 charter will be just as productive.

Thank you very much."

#### **OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

The Committee Chairman, Mr. Tim Leitzell, thanked RADM Casto for his remarks. The Chairman reminded those in attendance that the committee forms working groups, headed by a volunteer from the Committee, to address specific issues. Working groups then report the results of their progress at Committee meetings.

#### **OATH OF NEW MEMBERS**

The oath of office was administered to Mr. Raymond Butler, Ms. Beverly Clarke, Ms. Jann Sandwick, Ms. Laura Gissen, and Captain John Peterlin as new HOGANSAC members.

Mr. Leitzell stated that under the new charter, the Committee must also elect a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman. He added that two nominations for each was preferred. Larry Miller nominated Tim Leitzell for Chairman. The Committee unanimously voted for Tim Leitzell as the new Chairman. Tricia Clark nominated Larry Miller for Vice-Chairman. The Committee unanimously voted for Larry Miller as Vice-Chairman.

## **AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

The first award, a letter of appreciation from the Committee Sponsor, was presented to the departing HOGANSAC members: Mr. Sudheer Chand, Dr. Wyndlyn von Zharen, Mr. Dan Buchsbaum, Mr. Ernest Connor, and Mr. George Brumley. A copy of the letter is included as enclosure (3).

The second award was the Benkert Award, presented to Odjfell. A copy of the award's history and criteria as well as the recipient's accomplishments that were presented with this award are included as enclosure (4).

A Public Service Commendation was presented to Pat Studdert. A copy of the award citation is included as enclosure (5).

A Public Service Award was presented to Raymond Butler. A copy of the award citation is included as enclosure (12).

Tim Leitzell added his thanks and good-byes to the departing HOGANSAC members and his congratulations to the other award recipients.

## **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2002 MINUTES**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the previous meeting's minutes<sup>1</sup>.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Dredging Projects**

Larry Miller asked Al Meyer with the Army Corps of Engineers to provide an update on dredging projects. The South Boater's Cut is completed. The Dredge 506 is on the green side of the ship channel at marker 55 and will remain there until the end of April. The Dredge Tom James will return to the Bayport Flare in February and will be dredging the Bayport Channel and the flare and then finally shift to the green side of the Houston Ship Channel. This dredge will be in the area until March 2004.

The Goat Island project is 75% complete. The San Jacinto Island project is expected to begin soon and will last approximately 2 months. There will be a dredge in the lower bayou area in the March timeframe. Everyone will work together to try and maintain a separation of 5 miles between the dredges.

Larry Miller displayed a chart of the restored Redfish Island.

Captain Morris asked when to anticipate dredging of the shoal area from the Sea Buoy to Lighted Buoy 6 on the red side of the Houston Ship Channel. Larry Miller stated that there wasn't an answer for that at this time, but they are pushing the issue and doing what they can.

Larry Miller added that the entire project should be complete in mid-October of 2004.

<sup>1</sup> The minutes of the previous meeting, without enclosures, are included as enclosure (6).

Ellyn Roof noted that there seems to be an increase in the rate of shoaling and shoaling in new areas. Captain Morris stated that shoaling has always been a problem in certain areas, there just hasn't been much maintenance dredging lately. Larry Miller added that new dredging projects are overlapping into maintenance dredging which is causing delays.

#### **ATON Knockdown Working Group**

CDR Marian deferred information from this working group to be included with the State of the Waterways presentation.

#### **Mooring Subcommittee Report**

Tim Leitzell stated that the Committee is soliciting for a new chair for this subcommittee. There have been some great improvements but recently there has been less reporting. In summary, there is a need to keep awareness up and get this subcommittee going again.

#### **Bolivar Roads Anchorage Area**

CDR Marian handed out a Notice of Rule Making. There was a change to the coordinates and these were subsequently published in the Federal Register dated January 28, 2002. A copy of this excerpt of the Federal Register is included as enclosure (7).

#### **Recreational Boating Education Initiative**

Ellyn Roof reported that Redfish Island has been restored. She also noted that CDR Marian and Dan Wyatt worked together on an article that was published in "Telldales" along with a Security Zone flier. Captain Morris has also been working on the distribution of the "Sharing our Bay" pamphlet, recently distributed through the Harris County Sheriff Department.

Tim Leitzell asked Ms. Roof to get together with Raymond Butler. Recreational boating has been mentioned several times at the Port Security Subcommittee meetings.

#### **Port Security Subcommittee Report**

Raymond Butler first noted that there were copies of a chart available and that the Bolivar Alternate Route area is open. Hopefully, mariners will slowly adjust and begin using the channel. All of the aids are currently gone. CDR Marian and CAPT Hooper took a ride throughout the area yesterday and will be pursuing the safety issue. A chartlet of the Alternate Route is included as enclosure (8).

The Port Security Subcommittee is currently working on credentialing guidelines. They have initiated a Port Security Planning effort in Texas City and implemented an interim communications platform. The Port Security Plan is out in draft form for Committee members. The next meeting is scheduled for 0900 on February 27, 2003 at the Port Authority building.

A new Port Safety Information Bulletin has been created to help spread news on security issues.

The Subcommittee currently has six different working groups in progress

Tim Leitzell once again congratulated Raymond Butler on his Public Service Award. He also noted that the Alternate Channel is a tremendous safety issue and thanked all who have assisted in its implementation.

#### **Bridge Allision Working Group**

CDR Marian deferred to LCDR Steve Teschendorf for comments. LCDR Teschendorf stated that the working group has made great strides. A company from Scotland will be in the area in the first week of March to install a test system at the Kinder-Morgan Liquid Terminals site. This site is approximately two miles down-channel from the I-610 Bridge. The Rickmers Line has supplied \$5,000 to fund this test system.

#### **Swimmers Near Lynchburg**

Rebecca Caplan reminded the committee of the video of the area that had been made and was presented at the last meeting. A letter of concern will be drafted soon and will be distributed to key people, to include Congresswo/men and Senators. Dan Wyatt stated that he had talked to the manager of the Waterway Authority who noted that they are building a new road. This road is having easement allocation problems, but the project engineers are aware of this safety issue.

Captain Morris also stated that they are continuing to work on fencing off the area of concern. Raymond Butler suggested the letters would carry additional weight if signed by HOGANSAC.

Tim Leitzell reiterated the seriousness of this issue.

#### **Electronic Navigation**

Captain Morris stated that additional money for electronic navigation units had been obtained. Forty pilots have been trained to use the system and there are 20 units currently available for use. Right now the main objective is getting the pilots familiar with it. He also added that AIS is quickly coming down the road. The next working group meeting will be held in this room at 1400 today. A unit will be available on display.

#### **Texas City Container Terminal Update**

CDR Marian stated that a decision on the project should be made by the end of February, which is pushed back one month according to the initial time line. One hundred seventy five comments were made during the comment-making period, relating to truck traffic, vessel delays, and disposal concerns.

Alex Parkman stated that the plan is to begin construction by the end of the summer.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **State of the Waterway**

CDR Marian began by noting that the presentation is full of statistics and we are currently looking at why some of these things happen. A copy of this PowerPoint Presentation is included as enclosure (9).

The total number of movements was down 3.8% in 2002. The average number of vessel movements was 600 per day. Looking over the last 10 years, transits increased, then peaked in 2000. The number has decreased since then, but the 2002 data still indicates an upward trend in the number of vessel movements.

### **Channel Obstruction Policy**

CDR Marian distributed a copy on the new Captain of the Port policy on Channel Obstructions. The biggest difference to note in the new policy is the breakdown of requests into two categories. A copy of the new policy is included as enclosure (10).

Captain Cook stated that the working group had a difficult discussion on who had priority on this issue. By designing the system with two separate categories, it will allow for more flexibility for those who need it. It is difficult for many users to predict operations one week in advance. He is very optimistic that the policy is workable.

Captain Godinich expressed his thanks to Captain Cook and CDR Marian for the workable document. One issue occurred on his first ride under the new policy, a ride CDR Marian was on. A supplementing item in the Broadcast Notice to Mariners redefined the obstruction requirements between the Galveston Sea Buoy and Lighted Buoy 16. This flexibility ensured that the rig movement was completed much more quickly than advertised.

Tim Leitzell commented that the document was a good product and will help the area greatly. Members of the audience thanked CDR Marian for his efforts and expressed a hopeful outlook for continued cooperation.

### **San Jacinto River High Water Action Plan Initiative**

CDR Marian stated that Kirby hosted the working group meeting at the Channelview facility. The major outcome of the meeting was the determination that all of the user's had been focusing on the wrong water meter. The Lake Conroe meter measured only one-twelfth of the water flow that eventually emptied into the HSC from the San Jacinto River. He stated that a draft of the working document would be provided to all subcommittee members by the following day.

### **Safe Haven in Barbour's Cut**

Larry Miller stated that he has plans to get together with the Operations Manager at Barbour's Cut to discuss this issue. Jann Sandwick has also offered to assist the working group. Raymond Butler stated that the Army Corps of Engineers is asking the brown water fleet if they want an alternate to the old Atkinson Island Moorings that were removed last year. Captain Cook agreed and added that this may be an issue for more than just the Barbour's Cut location. If



there is a storm, where can everyone go? Ellyn Roof stated that there really is no place in the mid-bay that would be safe from the surge.

#### **AIS Rule Making Update**

Mr. Jorge Arroyo from the Coast Guard office of Vessel Traffic Management provided Committee members with an update on the AIS rule making. In short, there is a rule, but it has still not been released. A copy of this presentation is included as enclosure (11) and may be viewed on the Internet at [www.uscg.mil/vtm](http://www.uscg.mil/vtm).

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the full Committee will be held at the Offices of the Houston Pilots Association on Thursday, June 5, 2003. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. (Call (713) 645-9620 for directions.)

The Committee's working groups meeting will be held at the Seaman's Church Institute on Thursday, May 15, 2003. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. (Call (713) 670-2400 for directions.)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 PM.

CAPT KEVIN S. COOK  
Executive Director

Certified: TIMOTHY R. LEITZELL  
Committee Chair

Enclosures: (1) Published Agenda  
(2) List of Members and Public in Attendance  
(3) Letter of Appreciation to departing members  
(4) Talking points for Benkert Award presentation  
(5) Public Service Commendation for Mr. Patrick J. Studdert  
(6) Minutes of SEPTEMBER 19, 2002 HOGANSAC meeting  
(7) Federal Register dtd January 28, 2003  
(8) Bolivar Alternate Route Chartlet  
(9) State of the Waterway PowerPoint Presentation  
(10) Channel Obstruction Policy Letter dtd January 28, 2003  
(11) Office of Vessel Traffic Management AIS PowerPoint Presentation  
(12) Public Service Award for Mr. Raymond Butler